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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 000417

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: Hellenic Aid Director on Greek Assistance to Afghanistan

REF: 09 STATE 30044

CLASSIFIED BY: Woodward Clark Price, Economic Counselor; REASON:  
1.4(E)

¶1. (C) Deputy Chief of Mission met March 31 with Hellenic Aid Director Mercurios Karafotias to discuss the USG's new Afghanistan strategy, among other subjects. As she passed Karafotias the USG's White Paper on Afghanistan and Pakistan, she noted the push for stability in this region is of central importance to the USG, as witnessed by the appointment of Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke to manage the issue.

¶2. (C) Karafotias replied that Afghanistan is also a top priority for Foreign Minister Bakoyiannis. Whereas in many areas, Hellenic Aid has a problem nailing down resources, he noted that, for Afghanistan, "the money is secure." He said that the GOG agrees with the USG on the importance of bolstering civil society in Afghanistan and will provide assistance in three areas: 1. Fighting trafficking in persons, 2. Supporting women, and 3. Helping preserve records and knowledge of Afghan history to make certain the Taliban does not co-opt that history.

¶3. (C) Karafotias stressed that Greece is seeking to work cooperatively in Afghanistan. It is now working with Hungary on a joint program in the Baghlan Province and is in discussions with Canada to work on the Afghan-Pakistan border.

¶4. (C) Karafotias urged the USG to advance the effort to establish an international coordination mechanism for civilian assistance to Afghanistan.  
SPECKHARD